

# Western Michigan University

Kalamazoo, MI • Public School



The most comprehensive guide to free speech on campus — anywhere

*Because a true university education requires freedom of expression.*

The College Free Speech Rankings are based on student surveys, campus policies, and recent speech-related controversies.

## OVERALL RANK

168 ▲

/257

▲ 25 FROM 2024

## GRADE

F

— F FROM 2024

## SPEECH CONTROVERSIES

0

— 0 FROM 2025

## Overview

Western Michigan University ranks 168 out of 257 schools in the 2026 College Free Speech Rankings with a score of 56. The university climbed 25 places from last year, a modest gain that coincided with its decision to adopt institutional neutrality. Even so, WMU still earns a “red light” Spotlight rating.

The school ranks in the top 50 on “Self-Censorship,” indicating that more students feel they can speak freely.

WMU could make immediate progress by revising its restrictive speech policies to earn a “green light” Spotlight rating and by adopting the Chicago Statement.

### Spotlight Rating

Red



FIRE’s Spotlight database annually rates regulations on student expression based on the extent to which they restrict free speech.

If you are a school administrator and would like to discuss your rating, reach out to [speechcodes@thefire.org](mailto:speechcodes@thefire.org).

Visit our website: <https://rankings.thefire.org/> for more information.

## HIGHLIGHTS



31% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.



73% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.



37% of students say using violence to stop someone from speaking on campus is acceptable, at least in rare cases.

1.41:1

There are roughly 1.41 liberal students for every one conservative student.

### Institutional Neutrality

ADOPTED



### Chicago Statement for Free Speech

NOT ADOPTED



## SCORE DEEP DIVE

### COMFORT EXPRESSING IDEAS

D-

▲ INCREASE

### DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

C+

▼ DECREASE

### OPENNESS

C-

▲ INCREASE

### SELF-CENSORSHIP

D

▼ DECREASE

### ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

F

▲ INCREASE

### POLITICAL TOLERANCE

F

▼ DECREASE

### SCHOLARS UNDER FIRE

O

### STUDENTS UNDER FIRE

O

### DEPLATFORMINGS

O